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SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

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*Copy sent to Noel
Dorr, Secretary, P/FA.
23/5*

Noel 5

19 May 1988

Dear Aoiseach,

I was grateful to you for meeting me on Wednesday, 4 May. I appreciated the opportunity to explain to you our concerns on a number of matters.

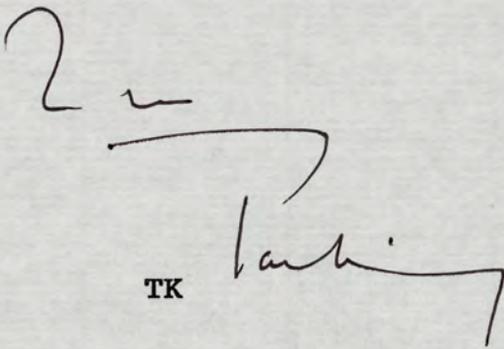
I confirmed to you our deep concern about the security situation, and the need for effective co-operation. I mentioned in particular the gravity with which we viewed the amount of Libyan arms still unrecovered. I drew attention to the concerns we had about restrictions on RUC/Garda co-operation. I am grateful for your assurances of full co-operation, and especially that meetings between the police forces may now resume in full - an assurance repeated later by Gerry Collins.

I underlined also what we see as the pressing need for a greater understanding of our respective approaches to the key issues within the Agreement. I explained that we regard the Agreement as an end in itself, subject only to the democratic choice of a majority in Northern Ireland. We do not see it as part of a process. This does not, of course, seek to deny people's rights to their own aspirations subject to this principle of consent. I understand that you wish to think further about these points that I put to you.

We also discussed the British Government's approach to devolution embodied in the current series of talks in which I am embarked. I explained that movement towards devolution is the long-standing policy of the British Government, reflected in Article 4 of the Agreement. The Agreement records that this policy is supported by the Irish Government. I sought your support for our interest in devolution and emphasised that we would appreciate your encouragement of the SDLP in that direction.

I have reported to the Prime Minister your firm assurance of your Government's firm commitment to the Agreement. It is of course most important that we have a common understanding between both Governments of what the Agreement represents. I explained our concerns, and you said that you would like to reflect on what I had said.

TK



DMC/2917

Mr Charles J Haughey TD